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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/500,654

07/02/2004

Michel Puech

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06/15/2006

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EXAMINER

DAHIMENE, MAHMOUD

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1765

DATE MAILED: 06/15/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/500,654	PUECH ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Mahmoud Dahimene	1765	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 March 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

3. Claims 1-9, 11-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Laermer et al. (US 5,501,893) in view of Rattner et al. (US 6,846,746)

Regarding claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 15, Laermer discloses a method of anisotropic plasma etching of silicon to provide laterally defined recess structures therein through an etching mask employing a plasma, the method including anisotropic plasma etching in an etching step a surface of the silicon by contact with a reactive etching gas to removed material from the surface of the silicon and provide exposed surfaces;

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polymerizing in a polymerizing step at least one polymer former contained in the plasma onto the surface of the silicon during which the surfaces that were exposed in a preceding etching step are covered by a polymer layer thereby forming a temporary etching stop; and alternatingly repeating the etching step and the polymerizing step. The method provides a high mask selectivity simultaneous with a very high anisotropy of the etched structures (abstract).

A difference is noted between applicants claim 1 and the reference of Laermer, in the method of Laermer, the etching gas removes the deposited polymer, Laermer is silent about a plasma of cleaning gas.

Rattner discloses a method of smoothing a trench sidewall after a deep trench silicon etch process where an oxygen gas plasma is used to remove polymer residue from the trench sidewalls (column 10, line 10).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the process of Laermer to include oxygen as a gas for plasma cleaning because the reference of Rattner teaches oxygen gas plasma is effective for removing polymer and obtaining smooth sidewalls. In this case, the plasma of cleaning oxygen gas is more effective than the etching gas at removal of the polymer. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to use an oxygen plasma in order to clean the cavity from all polymer when etching is done and smoothing the sidewalls, leaving a clean cavity when the desired etch depth is reached, and without further etching the cavity during the last cleaning step.

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As to claim 3, neither references cited suggest that the application of the plasma of cleaning gas overlaps the preceding or following steps.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the plasma cleaning step without overlap with the preceding or following steps.

As to claims 4, 5, Laermer discloses sulfur hexafluoride as the etching gas (column 4, line 1) and CHF_3 for the polymerization step (column 4, line 26).

As to claim 8, 9, It is noted that Laermer is silent about a bias potential (prestress) for the cleaning step. However, Laermer discloses "a substrate prestress for ion acceleration is applied to the substrate electrode" (column 4, line 7) the substrate bias is preferably between 5 and 30 Volts (column 4, line 9).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the process of Laermer by applying a similar low ion acceleration potential during the cleaning step in order to attract the ions of the cleaning plasma as well during cleaning. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to apply a low bias (between 5 and 30 V) in order to remove the polymer without subjecting the substrate to unnecessary higher ion energies. It is noted that Laermer's suggested bias range overlaps the applicants range. Overlapping ranges are held obvious.

As to claim 11, it is noted that Laermer is silent about the plasma cleaning pressure in a range of 0.5 Pa to 10 Pa, and preferably in the-g-range 2 Pa to 5 Pa (or 4-75 mT and 15-37 mT respectively).

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Laermer teaches 10-100 μ bar (7.5-75 mT) for the polymer removal/etch step.

Rattner teaches 2-25 mT for the post etch cleaning plasma pressure.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the process of Laermer by using a low pressure plasma cleaning step because both Laermer and Rattner suggest low pressure ranges (overlapping applicant's claimed ranges) for the cleaning step. Overlapping ranges are held obvious.

As to claim 12, 13, 14, it is noted that Laermer is silent about the duration of the cleaning step. However, cleaning time appears to be related to the degree of removal. As a result, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to select any cleaning duration that would effectively remove the desired level of polymer including the specific duration claimed by applicants, because cleaning time is proportional to the degree of removal. Applicants have not shown anything unexpected with respect to the specifically claimed cleaning duration.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Laermer et al. (US 5,501,893) in view of Rattner et al. (US 6,846,746) as applied to claims 1-9 above, and further in view of S. Wolf and R.N. Ttauber (Silicon Processing for the VLSI Era, Volume 1- Process Technology, Lattice Press, 1986, pages 544-545)

As to claim 10, it is noted that Laermer is silent about increasing progressively the bias potential from one cleaning step to another.

Wolf teaches the bias potential accelerates ions toward the wafer surface (pages 544-545).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the process of Laermer by applying a similar low ion acceleration potential during the cleaning steps and progressively increasing the bias potential as the etched recess (cavity) becomes deeper because Wolf teaches ion acceleration toward the wafer is a function of the bias. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to progressively increase the bias voltage on the substrate in order for the accelerated cleaning ions to reach the bottom of the cavity as deeper recesses require higher ion energies.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Laermer et al. (US 5,501,893) in view of Rattner et al. (US 6,846,746) as applied to claims 1-9 above, and further in view of Ohara et al. (US 6,277,756)

Regarding claim 16, Laermer teaches deep structures having vertical edges can be realized with very high etching rates in silicon substrates.

It is noted that Laermer is silent about a specific aspect ratio and micro-relief for the etched feature in silicon.

Ohara discloses a method for manufacturing a semiconductor device wherein a deep trench with an aspect ratio of 33.4 is etched in silicon (column 5, line 47). The method of Ohara involves repeated steps of etch and deposition.

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Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use the modified method of Laermer, discussed above, continuing the 3-step cycling until a trench having an aspect ratio greater than 30 is reached because the method of Laermer is specifically intended to etch deep features. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to etch a high aspect ratio trench with the modified method of Laermer because the method allows a good profile control.

Response to Arguments/Remarks

5. Applicant's arguments, see pages 16-21, filed 3/28/2006, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 1-5, 8 under 35 USC § 102(b), and claims 6, 7, 9-14 under 35 USC § 103 have been fully considered and are persuasive in view of the amendment reciting "the plasma of cleaning gas is more effective than the etching gas at removal of the protective polymer". Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Laermer et al. (US 5,501,893), Rattner et al. (US 6,846,746), Ohara et al. (US 6,277,756) and S. Wolf and R.N. Ttauber (Silicon Processing for the VLSI Era, Volume 1- Process Technology, Lattice Press, 1986, pages 544-545)

Conclusion

6. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

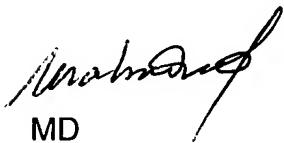
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mahmoud Dahimene whose telephone number is (571) 272-2410. The examiner can normally be reached on week days from 8:00 AM. to 5:00 PM..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nadine Norton can be reached on (571) 272-1465. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



MD

NADINE G. NORTON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
